DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 097 362 TM 003 997

AUTHOR	Ryan, Thomas F.; Cruz, Josue, Jr.
TITLE	Assessment: Humanizing Decision Making.
INSTITUTION	American Association of Elementary, Kindergarten, and Nursery Educators, Washington, D. C.
PUB DATE	74
NOTE	66p.
AVAILABLE FROM	American Association of Elementary-Kindergarten-Nursery Educators, 1201 Sixteenth St., N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036 (Stock Number 281-08904) ($3.00)
EDRS PRICE	MF-$0.75 HC Not Available from EDRS. PLUS POSTAGE
DESCRIPTORS	*Decision Making; *Early Childhood Education; *Educational Assessment; *Elementary Education; Evaluation Criteria; *Instructional Improvement; Measurement; Personnel Evaluation; Teacher Role

ABSTRACT

A total assessment system based upon the concepts and processes dealt with in this study/action publication to help improve decision-making is presented. Three groups of people are dealt with specifically: children in the early years, (through grade three); children in the middle years, (through grade eight); and professional educators. The conclusion of the assessment process is in two parts: a decision about an individual and an analysis of the total assessment system. The decision about the individual should involve the individual and result in an educational improvement. Analysis of the system should result in an improved system. It is the responsibility of the system to assist the individual to refocus existing knowledge, attitudes and skills or develop new ones through existing in-service activities. Professional assessment depends upon the allocation of sufficient resources to do the job. It is essential to that task that professionals develop a comprehensive approach to the question. A process for getting started, some problems to avoid, and some characteristics to include have been suggested. This document is a work and study guide for teachers, parents, community groups and administrators to develop a plan of action to educate children in our society. (Author/RC)

ASSESSMENT: HUMANIZING DECISION MAKING

by Thomas F. Ryan and Josue Cruz

A STUDY/ACTION PUBLICATION FROM

AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF
ELEMENTARY-KINDERGARTEN-
NURSERY EDUCATORS
1201 Sixteenth Street, N.W.
Washington, D. C. 20036

Work and Study Guide for

teachers
parents
community groups
administrators

to develop

A PLAN OF ACTION

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American Association of Elementary-Kindergarten-Nursery Educators (E/K/N/E)

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INTRODUCTION

Determining the best path to follow with an individual child is a puzzle educators face daily. Goals, objectives, learning experiences, teaching styles and assessment come to a head in the decisions we make. As we talk with parents, children, teachers and administrators across the nation, we are confronted with the need to make better decisions. But the quality of decisions is dependent upon the quality of information available at a critical moment. We believe that a total assessment system based upon the concepts and processes dealt with in this study/action publication can help improve decision-making.

Throughout the publication we have used the term educator. We include all those individuals committed through regular participation to the improvement of children's educational programs. With that in mind, specific labels or roles seem inappropriate. Throughout the publication, you will be asked to participate. We hope you will! When you do, we anticipate that your responses will reflect your particular role. Thus, parents, teachers and administrators may respond in different yet equally appropriate ways.

We have tried to deal specifically with three groups of people: children in the early years, (through grade three); children in the middle years, (through grade eight); and professional educators. We encourage you to avoid skipping any section dealing with levels other than that with which you work; we believe educators benefit--especially in the sense of continuity--by knowing more about various levels of the development of children.

Before you begin, consider why you are reading and participating in this publication. Consideration of this question may determine whether or how you proceed. We suggest that you go through this publication with a colleague. The ideas and activities will gain meaning as they are discussed and challenged.

As you begin, let us warn you not to expect answers to all your problems. What you will find depends not only upon how you look but more pointedly upon what we have been able to present. We fully confess to limitations of knowledge and vision and request your constructive suggestions for strengthening and extending assessment in the educational setting.

Chapter I - DECISIONS, DECISIONS

Have you made any decisions lately? Big--little? Take a moment to jot down the most recent decision you have made.

Are you sure that it is the most recent? Make a list of at least five decisions you made recently while acting in your role as educator.

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

Did your decisions result in action? If they did, list the action(s) associated with each decision.

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

Did your decisions and/or actions affect others? Whom did they affect?

- _____
- _____
- _____

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

At this point, you may wish to consider how these individuals were affected. Were they facilitated or blocked, liberated or restrained? What considerations affected your decisions and subsequent actions?

Do you feel good about the decisions you've listed? Do others feel good about them? Why? How might you improve the effectiveness of decision-making? That's what this publications is all about--decision-making. More specifically it is about the ways in which assessment can contribute to sound educational decisions.

Decisions in Context

> As the children enter my room for the first time this year, I am struck by a comment recalled from Andre's permanent record card, "You'll enjoy Andre. He's a good student!" I wonder--did the comment mean a good math student, a good reader, a well behaved student? How will these comments affect Andre's life in my classroom?
>
> How much of my relationship to Andre is influenced by the positive nature of the comment? Suppose the comment had been, "Andre is a boy of considerable potential who has failed to maximize his intellectual opportunities and social relationships." What about the effect of a cryptic, "You'll have your hands full with this youngster"?

Faced with the tremendously important decision of how to work with a specific child, our basis of viewpoint becomes extremely important. Conversely, what does the child's frame of reference tell him/her about us? How will the child measure our action? On what basis will s/he evaluate? What will his/her assessment of the relationship be? The quality of our interaction will be enhanced if our individual frames of reference are known.

Assessment can help us identify and communicate the whys and hows of interaction in the classroom. A fully developed system can increase the probability that the interaction will be both positive and productive. Decisions become more important when we set our sights on positive human relations.

Decisions usually imply a power relationship between people. Individuals with power make decisions for or about individuals without power. Administrators make decisions about teachers when they change assignments, adopt curriculum materials and group students for instruction. Teachers make decisions about and for the student(s) when we plan learning experiences, select instructional materials and evaluate progress. Powerless people are at an obvious disadvantage if they disagree with the decision(s) unless they have access to a process for altering the decision.

Teachers have established mechanisms to seek redress of grievances either directly or through the intermediary of their professional organizations. Children do not have this advantage. Children, identified by most educators as "Those we serve!" remain powerless in terms of the decisions which affect most of their waking moments. We seek to change the power relationship implied by traditional decision-making or evaluation systems.

To start we will have to reestablish the development of the child rather than the survival of the institution as the primary goal of every school. Such an assertion would require the child to participate in establishing his/her educational goals as well as the means of assessing progress toward those goals. It also means that the child must become an active participant in assessment rather than merely a passive source of data. Professional educators confident of themselves, competent in their techniques and committed through caring to the worth of each individual are the ones who will succeed in establishing the relationships we seek. Can we afford less for our children?

We hope this study/action publication will help develop or extend our individual frames of reference to include such relationships. At the same time, we hope to establish some processes which will provide reference points which professional educators can use to make decisions. More importantly, we hope the book will stimulate communication with others about those decisions. Our focus will be on the process of assessment.

Decisions of Educators

Each of us makes literally thousands of decisions each day. Decisions are required in order to successfully fulfill the requirements of each of the many roles we play. Responsible human beings try to base decisions on the best data available at the moment of choice. In addition to good data, sound decision-making requires judgment based upon a set of personal values. These values represent our personal set of priorities and guide our action.

When our decisions affect others, humaneness requires that their interests be considered. We will focus on the decisions we make while acting as educators. As professional educators, our decisions ought to be both humane and rational. Consider the fact that most of the decisions we make each day are automatic. We act or react often "out of force of habit," or based on long experience, or "because it seemed like the right thing to do." Translated these statements become, "based on my personal priorities established through thoughtful consideration of experience, I decided to pursue this course of action." The keys to the quality of the action lie in our experience and our perception and understanding of that experience.

As educators, most of our activity--hence a majority of our decisions--involve interactions with other people. Each action we take affects a person or persons. Among the persons affected by our actions are individual children, children in groups, peers, parents, the community and, of course, ourselves.

It is difficult to contemplate the myriad of factors which influence the way we interact with those who snare our environment. The composite of our experiences, aptitudes and aspirations provides us with a set of expectations about people, places and events. These expectations may be thought of as a frame of reference. Our personal perspective helps us to make decisions about how to act in a variety of situations and with a variety of people. Thus, our personal basis of viewpoint provides a standard which we use to measure the situations we encounter each day.

To the degree that our personal frame of reference is complete, we are able to evaluate the situation, make a decision and act. If our perspective is incomplete or contradictory, we may be uncertain, confused or even immobilized and may make incorrect decisions. As professional educators, we cannot afford to be confused or make incorrect decisions, much less to be immobilized. Therefore, we must strive for the development of a complete frame of reference. More importantly, those elements of our basis of viewpoint which assist the performance of our professional role must be shared by our colleagues as well as the children we serve. This is necessary to help others form a sound frame of reference in order to complete the interaction.

Where Do We Begin?

Educators spend much time talking about the progress of children. While such talk usually focuses on tests and testing, measurement and evaluation, the term assessment is also gradually creeping into our discussions. The addition of new terms, even when carefully defined, often causes confusion. In a special effort to avoid such confusion, let us begin by jotting down the meaning of some key terms. Define measurement, evaluation and assessment as you understand them in your particular context.

Measurement _____

_____

_____

Evaluation _____

_____

_____

Assessment _____

_____

_____

Compare your definitions to those which we have drawn from the work of other educators. (A thorough description of the development of these definitions may be found in Appendix A.)

Measurement . . . the application of a standard to a set of data.

examples: (a) This tape is 12 inches long.
(b) Alice, a fifth grade student, is reading at the 4.1 level --according to test manual "norms."

summary: information + a standard = measurement

Evaluation . . . the consideration of a set of measurement data in terms of specified priorities for change.

examples: (a) A 12 inch tape is not long enough to seal our package.
(b) Since Alice is in the third month of grade five, she is "labelled" a slow reader.

summary: information + a standard + priorities = evaluation

Assessment . . . a process of inventorying an individual's strengths and weaknesses, needs and personality characteristics, knowledges, skills and attitudes useful in relating the roles demanded by the environment "with the roles the individual is able to play."

examples: (a) Although a 20 inch tape could seal the package, the Postal Service now requires the use of string.

(b) A standardized reading test administered at the end of last school year indicated that Alice was reading at the 3.6 level. Yet, Alice contributes actively to group activities and demonstrates considerable awareness and sensitivity to others and to her environment. She also reads and comprehends most curriculum materials. Perhaps the test was not adequate.

summary: information + a standard + priorities + the situation = assessment

We believe assessment is far superior to measurement or evaluation as a basis for decision-making in education. Our belief is based on the notion that the *context does make a difference.* The context includes the children we work with, our colleagues, school policies and regulations both explicit and implied and the like. These conditions affect the discretion of the teacher in dealing with a particular set of circumstances as they occur in the classroom.

For example, training may have equipped me with two ways of dealing with an emotionally distraught child. Experience may have provided two or three additional techniques. However, school policy may require a fifth and totally different technique. The required technique may be the most humane and efficient but my flexibility is limited by the requirement. Decisions will be effective only to the extent the context is considered.

The next three sections will focus on three interacting elements in the educational environment: ourselves, the children we serve, and the context within which we act and react.

FINDING OUT ABOUT OURSELVES

Any attempt to establish a frame of reference which helps us to make decisions begins with self-perception. Who we are does make a difference as to how we act in the classroom. Decision-making then must begin with self-assessment. The assessment process helps answer questions about who we are as persons as well as educators. What is it that we truly value in education? How do these values get translated into action? How do the actions affect children?

Louis Raths and his colleagues in their most useful book, Values and Teaching (13), state that:

> Persons have experiences; they grow and learn. Out of experiences may come certain guides to behavior. These guides tend to give direction to life and may be called values. Our values show what we tend to do with our limited time and energy (13).

Raths and colleagues list seven criteria as standards to measure something to determine whether it is really a value. Their standard can be summarized: a value must be chosen freely from among alternatives after consideration of consequences. Further, an individual must feel good about his/her choice, be willing to affirm the choice when challenged and must act on the basis of the choice. Finally, the actions must be consistent in similar situations over time.

The process by which an individual arrives at value positions is called valuing, and the essence of valuing, simply stated, "is the discovery of self followed by careful examination of what one finds" (5).

We might begin the process by taking a moment to write a few key characteristics which define us as persons. They may include some demographic information, the various roles we play and so on.

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

We have found it useful at this point to stop and consider personal goals and objectives. An educator who has clearly established personal goals and objectives is in a better position to help children establish their goals. Take a moment to write down your goals.

- _____
  _____
- _____
  _____
- _____
  _____
- _____
  _____
- _____
  _____

Did you concentrate only on goals associated with the role of educator? Hopefully you took a broader look at your personal goals. However, we are concerned here mainly with those things which affect us as educators. With that in mind, we

would like you to engage in a short activity with two parts. Below is a partial list of behaviors which could be set as priorities for schools of the future (8). Please read the entire list and then indicate which behaviors you believe should take precedence over the others. Assign a 1 to the behavior of highest priority, a 2 to the next highest priority and so on. You need not assign numbers to all behaviors, but you should indicate at least the three top priorities you would choose as well as the three behaviors which you feel are least important. Assume that all of these behaviors are measurable and that all students would be capable of attaining these behaviors before graduating from our public schools.

____ Can identify propaganda techniques used by an author or speaker.

____ Can read and interpret various map and globe projections.

____ Has a minimum of 15,000 words in his/her word-recognition vocabulary.

____ Can identify, within selected materials, the conclusion and supporting statements of the writer.

____ Can translate a high percentage of mathematical formulas into their verbal equivalents.

____ Can distinguish between factual claims and opinions using logical argumentation in establishing the former.

____ Demonstrates empathy for people within or outside his/her own ethnic, racial or socioeconomic group.

____ Can use a language other than English at a sixth-grade comprehension level.

____ Demonstrates skills of leadership (organizing, implementing and evaluating).

____ Has read and can discuss many of The Great Books.

____ Can arrange personal ideas s/he has written in a logical order.

____ Can set up criteria for identifying examples of "good" art in judging his/her own work as well as the work of professional artists.

____ Can list those rights and responsibilities stated in the United States Bill of Rights.

____ Can identify and defend a personal system of beliefs in areas where social and political conflict exist.

____ Uses standard rules of language in personal writing and speaking.

____ Can identify crucial incidents related to the problem of growing alienation in our society.

____ Can draw reasoned conclusions from physical science experiments s/he has observed.

____ Can recall 90 percent of the information in works s/he selects to read.

If you compare the rankings of several people, you will undoubtedly discover disagreements and differences. Reflect on the differences and make use of them if possible, but do not waste time on efforts at statistical analysis such as averaging. It is our opinion that honest reflection of educational priorities tells us a great deal about who we are.

Having reflected on these statements of behaviors, we should be ready to list some of the goals we as educators hold for children. We would like you to list both immediate and underlying or long-term goals you hold for children. By immediate we mean day to day. Underlying goals refer to those we hope to do for the child in the long-run.

Immediate Goals _____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Underlying Goals _____

_____

_____

_____

_____

What value positions are inherent in your goal statements? How do they affect the way you assess the educational progress of the children you learn with each day? The answers to these questions will determine the approach to the remainder of this publication. An indication of what the authors believe may help.

We hold a single long-term goal for the persons we serve. Ultimately, we hope for competent, confident, caring, literate, humane beings. We believe that to accomplish this goal educators must facilitate the development of four dimensions of literacy: personal, social, intellectual and aesthetic. The decisions we make must contribute to this goal. We believe the assessment techniques suggested in the remainder of this publication can help us make sound professional as well as personal decisions.

What Does It Mean?

What is the relationship between goal statements and actual teaching style? Do we practice what we preach? Can a colleague, parent, child or supervisor see your earlier stated goals reflected in the day to day interaction in your classroom? An additional consideration must be added--the considerable impact of me! Specifically, what do I need and what can I do in the educational setting in which I live daily? List as many of each as you can.

What I Need	What I Can Do
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

Reflection on our personal lists reveals some possible reasons for success as well as failure to always achieve our goals. It also suggests areas which require additional data to help plan personal programs for improvement. We wonder if others perceive the same needs and abilities. Have we overlooked strengths. . . weaknesses?

FINDING OUT ABOUT CHILDREN

Education is primarily a communication process. The effectiveness of our communications is directly dependent upon the messages we choose to send or receive. Perhaps more important is the communications procedure or media we choose for sending or receiving. Decisions to send or not to send, receive or not receive are often based on our perception of the needs of our audience. Similar considerations plus our understanding of the audience's abilities affect our choice of media. We need to assess our audience in order to gather data that will allow us to send the right message at the right time via appropriate media.

Conversations among educators often include references to "my children" or "my class." Who are your children? Many educators use forms similar to the one presented here to help determine what they know about the children they teach. In order to help become more aware of each of your children, complete the following table of information. First, list only the names of all your students in the left hand column. (No fair using class records.)

NAME	DESCRIPTIVE ADJECTIVES	NEEDS	CAN DO

Were you able to remember everyone the first time through? Did anyone get left off the list? It may be interesting to spend some time thinking about the order in which the children are listed. Sometimes we can begin to learn how we relate to a group of children by determining how we relate to them as individuals. What do you think caused a particular child to be listed first . . . last? Jot down some of the reasons (criteria?) in the space provid .

Now return to the form. Beside the name of each child, write the first descriptive adjective that comes to mind. What does this data tell us?

In the third column, write a word or two telling what you think each child needs most. Then write in the last column a word or two about what each child can do best. You may wish to expand the form to include things the child needs least or cannot do. A review of the data included in the form will help us understand why some learning activities work and why others don't, and why some work for some children but not for others. The data will also provide help in planning for tomorrow and beyond.

Now, stop for a moment to consider very carefully how closely you feel your approximations of each child's need, can do, and descriptive adjective represent the reality within that child. Do you find yourself needing further information? Do you really know each child as the person s/he truly is? Perhaps it would be interesting to duplicate the form you've just used and invite your children to fill it out with the same procedure you used. Do they include the teacher as part of "our class?" Compare their information with yours.

We have found that our clearest thinking and most effective definition of direction occurs in dialogue with students and colleagues. These dialogues have helped us time and again to clarify our focus. The dialogue usually begins with the question: "What kinds of things do children need?" Jot down your own answers.

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

While answers cover a wide range of specifics, some of the most frequent are:

Appropriate sex model	Silence	Restrictions
Freedom	Discipline	Activity
Achievement	Success	Praise
Rewards	Love	Other people
Acceptance	Security	Positive self-concept
Food	Clothes	Attention
Motivation	Guidance	Clean air

How does your list compare to our partial list? It is often interesting to note the similarities of ideas contained in different words. As we examine the list of children's needs, we can begin to group them into categories. For example, food and clothes might be called biological needs. The items we have listed might be categorized as follows:

Food, Clothes . . . . . Physical/biological needs
Love, Acceptance, Freedom . . . . . Social needs
Security, Praise, Reward, Love. . . . . Emotional needs
Achievement, Success, Knowledge . . . . . Intellectual needs
Clean air . . . . . Environmental needs

Do your items fit the categories? Are there categories we overlooked?

_____ _____
_____ _____
_____ _____

The question of children's needs is followed closely by the question of children's abilities. "What can children do?" Once again a list develops. Here is our list. Add to it in the space provided.

Children can:

Communicate	Move
Motivate	Construct
Match	Utilize tools
Think concretely	Perceive
Play	Pretend
Sleep	Love
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

The list is not exhaustive but it does represent a fair sample of children's abilities.

Teachers find themselves faced with children who have these kinds of needs and abilities. The children vary both in terms of the relative importance of needs and individual ability "to do." We teachers are committed to helping them grow. We are expected to help them learn something. How do we decide what? Or, having decided what we wish the child to learn, how do we decide the method for working with the child with the highest probability of success in instruction? Perhaps answers can be found by looking at the kinds of things children need and the kinds of things they are able to do. Identifying the point where those two things come together may enable us to design instructional activities that focus at the point of convergence. Fortunately, some people have already attempted this identification. If we talk about children's needs, we can look at some of the things that have been done by Eric Erikson, Carl Rogers, Arthur Combs and Abraham Maslow.

The choice of category systems to apply to children's needs in the process of instructional planning is arbitrary. We have selected the hierarchy proposed by Maslow because it seems to explain much about children in a relatively simple, straightforward manner. As we read Maslow, mary of the things we had observed about children fell into place. His hierarchy thus became the foundation of our model for instruction. (For further study of Maslow's thinking, see reference 10.)

Maslow suggests that human needs may be categorized as physiological requirements, safety, love, esteem, self-awareness and self-actualization. His thesis is that people act to meet these needs; therefore, each human action can be analyzed with reference to the hierarchy and subsequently categorized. For teachers the interesting characteristic of Maslow's approach is its entirely positive manner. He views individuals as basically good--acting to meet needs in a positive fasion. As teachers we find this a very useful way to approach children. Reexamine the categories which were used to group children's needs a few paragraphs earlier. We can now substitute Maslow's hierarchy with good effect. They then become:

Food, clothes	Physiological requirements
Security, praise, reward.	Safety
Love, acceptance, freedom	Love
Achievement, success, knowledge	Esteem, self-awareness self-actualization

Clean air, love, freedom and others may be located in any one of the categories depending on the point of view of the person who is doing the placing--that is, some items aren't readily isolated to any one category.

Turn now to the question of ability. In examining the list of things children can do, keep in mind the reference to Maslow's hierarchy. Jean Piaget has posited the notion that from the time a child is born s/he moves through certain stages of cognitive development. Piaget's observation of children has produced data from which he has developed his categories: sensorimotor, preoperational, concrete and abstract. (Further development of these concepts including implications and suggestions for instruction may be found in reference 8.)

Implications for Instruction

While this publication focuses on the role of assessment in decision-making in education, implications for curriculum planning and instruction are very strong. Commitment to education based on the needs and abilities of individuals presents a difficult task. (The difficulty of the task, by the way, highlights the need for continuous comprehensive assessment.) A brief diversion into the question of curriculum is in order.

The needs/abilities focus implies a continuous progress, process/concept oriented curriculum. In this kind of a curriculum, children must first learn to process information, signals, people and the like which they encounter daily. They must know how to identify a problem or an idea. They learn to organize things and ideas, how to fit them into patterns of language and how to tell others about them. Each moment brings new opportunities to improve existing processing skills and to develop new ones. For instance, children move from knowing they exist to knowing who they are, to knowing they are persons of worth. Each person learns these ideas as s/he processes the people, ideas and things s/he meets every day.

A truly successful processor has probably achieved personal literacy. The individual knows who s/he is and can relate information to his/her concept of self. Intellectual literacy is also well on its way in so far as the child can follow a problem-solving procedure and communicate results.

The content we select for learning experiences designed to facilitate development of literacy is made up of concepts. Although we opt for use of those concepts most important to the child, we believe educators, parents and community representatives have a responsibility to constantly expand the set of concepts which might

be selected by children. Full development of learning experiences to illustrate a particular set of concepts is necessary for meeting the different needs and learning styles of children. That means that for each concept we must identify experiences which illustrate the concept in different ways. For example, experiences illustrating the concept of classification may be as follows:

using attribute blocks	listening for musical notes
grouping leaves	_____
selecting colors	_____
measuring classmate's height	_____

But each of us also knows that concepts are illustrated and become known at varying levels of sophistication. Classification on the basis of color or shape is different from classification based on size and weight, and is certainly different and less sophisticated than classification based on role or personal worth. We realize, therefore, that each experience we share with children will influence the nature of the learning space needed, the way children are grouped and the degree of involvement or strategy used by the teacher.

Developing curricular materials to support concept-based instruction is both exciting and frustrating. It is exciting because it requires our searching for alternatives to or alternatives uses of what we have. It is frustrating because it does not end. Once we start on this course, we do not turn back. Many of you are well aware of these difficulties and have reconciled them. Others may wish to try your hand at identifying a set of experiences to facilitate learning about classification.

Now let's look at how curriculum development applies to the development of a child. Suppose we have identified learning experiences drawn from several curricular areas. Each experience represents a different level of sophistication. Also suppose that we can see what is available in the area of experiences. Our problem then becomes one of identifying and adjusting the experiences on the basis of a particular child's needs and abilities. Diagnostic assessment procedures will reveal indications of those needs and abilities. Specific assessment approaches and techniques are developed in the remainder of this study/action publication.

In the best of all possible classrooms, learning experiences have been designed to directly match the assessed needs and abilities of the individual child. In the real world, this seldom occurs. The educator's creativity and experience is called upon to modify what we have or to develop new experiences for each child. In the process the potential of the total curriculum to meet the needs of other children grows.

Implications for Assessment

A comprehensive assessment system requires clear understanding of goals and objectives. Why we are assessing once again becomes a crucial question. Why do you measure, test, evaluate, assess . . . children? Take a moment to list some reasons in the space provided. (Remember that we sometimes do things to meet objectives established by others.)

- _____
_____
- _____
_____

•

•

•

•

All too often the rationale for assessment revealed in the actual testing program indicates that the primary goals are: 1) to gather data for permanent record files in order to justify decisions about children, and 2) to provide material to meet the system's public information demands. Thus children pass or fail and the community reads that its school children scored above or below national averages (norms) on certain tests. This use of data may be necessary but we would reduce it to a low priority and refocus assessment of children toward the goal of educational improvements measured by success in meeting needs and developing abilities. The data we gather ought to contribute to decision-making designed to provide a quality educational experience for each child. Review the reasons for assessing you wrote above. Do they individually and as a group contribute to this goal?

Some educators believe that we should not assess children except in narrowly defined skill areas. Can you react to this position in the space provided?

•

We believe that quality cannot exist in a vacuum. It requires a frame of reference, a bench mark against which it can be judged. We conclude that assessment is necessary to help establish that frame of reference. If we accept the goal of quality experience for each child, direction begins to emerge.

Assumptions

Assessment designed to achieve the goals stated thus far is based on these assumptions:

1. There is a hierarchy of physical-psychological-social-cultural developmental needs. A pupil who has not had anything to eat is more concerned about food than taking a battery of tests.
2. There are stages of intellectual development. Each individual moves through these stages at his/her own unique rate of growth.
3. Children's personal-social and later cultural needs change with physical maturation. Content must be relevant to their lives and immediate environment.

4. The purpose of assessment is to determine what an individual child needs as well as what that child can do at a given time in a particular setting.

What we have attempted to show is that children are, indeed, individuals and should be assessed as such. We find that children have certain identifiable needs, levels of intellectual development and different interests. Educators as people have similar needs and have traveled the same developmental path. As educators interested in quality experiences for ourselves and children, we must set our assessment plan to gain knowledge in three important areas.

1. Know who you are, what you need and what you can do when you are taking the role of teacher.
2. Know who your pupils are, what they need and what they can do as individuals as well as in group situations.
3. Know what the environment is, what options the physical plant, curriculum, personnel policy, parental requirements or professional relationships provide and/or preclude.

Purposes of Assessment

Several purposes of assessing pupils have been strongly implied above. However, lest the communication go awry they are restated.

We diagnose what the child needs and what s/he can do.

We build a personalized instructional program.

We assess the child's growth from experience to experience.

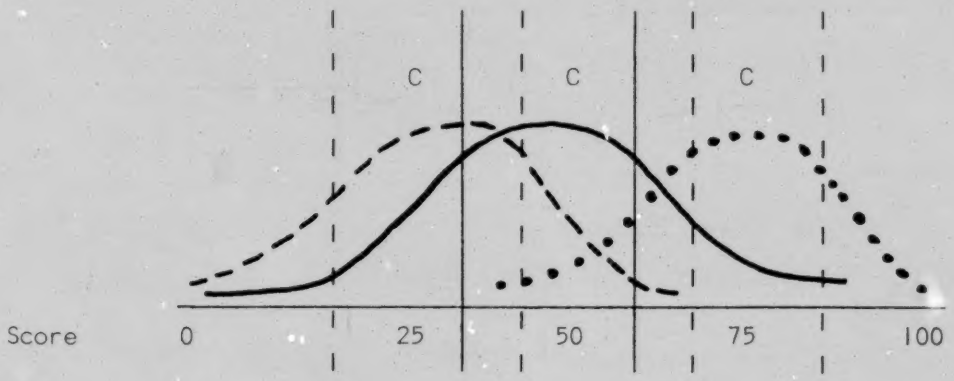
We revise the personalized program based on new knowledge about what the child needs and what s/he can do.

Classroom evaluation has for many years been based on the related concepts of readiness and mastery. Readiness referred to the pupil's ability to pursue the next step in the instructional program. Mastery referred to the pupil's ability to demonstrate success in meeting the objectives of previous instruction. Therefore mastery of step one equalled readiness for step two. Mastery and readiness are obviously individual characteristics. Unfortunately curriculum development and teaching technique have tended to consider both mastery and readiness as group characteristics when the time comes for evaluation. Make a list of the last five tests you have used with your pupils.

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

Consider the list. How were the results used? Did they result in an adjustment of learning experiences for each of the children tested? Often we find that the results were entered in a class record book--marking the end of one unit of study for the group and the beginning of another. Marking "on the curve," while somewhat contradictory, is a strategy used to facilitate this approach. The average score of the group, rather than absolute mastery, becomes the frame of

reference. The curve may move up and down the range of possible scores depending upon the teacher's perception of the group's readiness to move ahead, the requirements of the curriculum and the validity of the test in question. The following drawing illustrates the concept using a hypothetical test of 100 items.



——— the "Normal Curve" of expected scores

. . . . an example of scores skewed to the high end of the possible range

------- an example of scores skewed to the low end of the possible range

Depending upon the difficulty of the test and upon the use or misuse of this procedure, the C range may vary as much as 50 points or more. The concept of mastery is clearly violated in favor of record keeping and moving ahead. More importantly, the growth of the individual child is hidden in the group score.

Quality educational experiences based on the individual child's needs and abilities necessitate a different approach to assessment. If we accept the concept of growth as a continuous process, assessment must also become continuous. It must begin at least by the time the child enters the educational environment. It will change as the focus of experiences changes. Subsequent sections will focus on these changes.

FINDING OUT ABOUT THE CONTEXT

The achievement of education goals is facilitated by the effective use of available resources. The level of achievement depends upon the clarity of the goals. But success is equally dependent upon adequate resources and our professional competence to use them. An additional condition which must be taken into account is freedom or discretion. That is, what can we as educators do and what are we prohibited from doing? This section deals with goals, resources, controls and discretion.

Why Are We Here?

The founding of a school is a conscious act. Purposes or goals for the school's existence are usually identified and recorded. Why does your particular school exist?

•

•

•

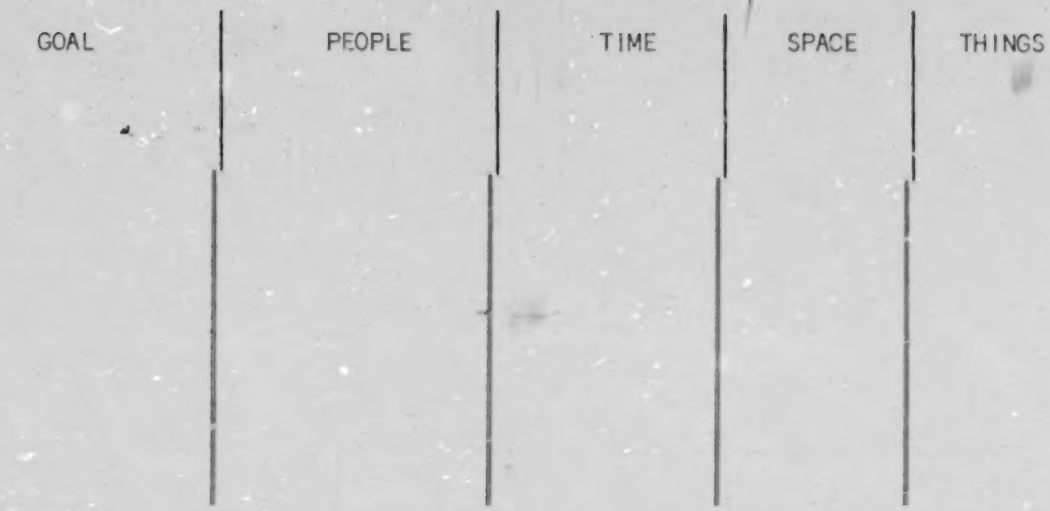
How do you know that the reasons listed accurately describe the goals of the founders? Goal statements can usually be found in documents issued by the Board of Education. Often educators answer the question based on their perception of the actual operation of the school. Many times this approach reveals significant differences. Return to your answer for a moment and consider how it would change if you used an alternate data source. Does your answer reflect the position held by the current Board of Education, parents, superintendent and building principal? Do their goals coincide with yours?

What's Available?

A clearer picture of the goals of our education enterprise helps in the assessment of available resources. A simple and effective way to begin assessing resources is to inventory them. Major categories of educational resources include people, time, space and things. Time, space and things currently available are readily identifiable. People, while an obvious resource, are often overlooked as we consider the interaction between ourselves and our children. Identify the people resources available to support your efforts to serve children.

We often forget the rich resources of residents of the community. The retiree working as a crossing guard who became a volunteer teacher-aide, the international banker who described his work in a series of visits to a junior high classroom--there are so many knowledgeable individuals who only await our invitation to participate. They add vast dimensions to the readily identifiable support personnel in our school systems. You see, the above mentioned interaction between ourselves and our children should also include our community.

The great diversity of priorities advocated and implemented by different schools makes the prescription of a single best means of assessing resources difficult. However we have found the process of assessing available resources to achieve a specific goal very helpful. Select one goal which you believe the school is attempting to reach and list the resources available to support the effort.



Now add additional resources which you feel would insure success! Repeating the process for additional goals will provide a more accurate picture of what is available, as well as an increased sensitivity to what ought to be available. This data puts us once again at a decision point. Do we have what we need? If not, how do we change the situation?

Who Decides?

Every institution has control points. The school is by no means an exception. By the same token, institutions have policies and procedures through which change can be accomplished. Effective educators know the policies and procedures as well as the individuals who occupy control points. There are many potential decision-makers in the system; some are obvious, others are more difficult to identify. Use the space provided to list three or four requests or needs about which you have recently attempted to get decisions. Now identify the person(s) who made the decisions. We have listed some additional items for your consideration.

Request	Who Decided?
.	
.	
.	
.	
. supplementary reading materials	
. revised curriculum guide	
. new course approval	
. visit a commune	

It is also important to identify and understand the decision-making process. What specific procedures were used? What sort of data carried the most weight? Was timing an important factor?

Clear understanding of the who and how of decision-making in our own settings contributes both to improved learning experiences for children and staff morale.

What Can We Do?

Most of the decisions related to instruction and many dealing with personal interactions are straightforward and non-threatening for the teacher with accurate perception of self, children and community. Professional discretion in these daily situations is given wide range. We can employ our own style to do the job!

However, occasionally we are faced with conflict, apparent or real, between the system and our personal professional position. These incidents require accurate and complete information to support our action. Assume that you are committed to providing learning experiences based on the needs and abilities of individual children. What do you do if the school holds tenaciously to a program which frustrates or ignores children's needs?

You must decide whether to do anything and if so, what?

We are not preparing to advocate compliance with such a system. We are recommending that you make yourself fully aware of the predictable consequences of whatever decision you make--that you explore the parameters of the world in which you operate. Here is a framework for the exploration--an analysis for coping with a problem or perhaps even solving it.

PROBLEM

It is time for a change, but the change is resisted.

KEY QUESTIONS

Who decides the conditions under which I teach?

What can I do to influence decisions which affect my teaching?

HYPOTHESES

I am the master of my own ship.

Decisions are made by an unknown "they" (spoken about often in the teacher's lounge) who are not responsive to my influence.

(Quite possibly neither of these hypotheses is wholly correct; you may make some decisions, "they" make others.)

NEEDED DATA

1. What does the State Department of Education say about curriculum?
2. Who determines the textbooks and supplementary materials available for use in instruction?
3. Does the school district have a curriculum council? What does it do?
4. Does the district employ curriculum supervisors? Do they recommend or do they direct? Do they evaluate teachers?
5. Is the school principal primarily an instructional leader or an administrator?

6. Are teachers in the district aware of educational developments on the national level?
7. What federal funds does the school district receive? How are they used?
8. What other groups provide incentive for program development?

SOURCES OF DATA

1. Fellow teachers in your building and district.
2. Your principal--an interview.
3. Your school district's staff directory.
4. State and/or local curriculum guides.
5. Bulletins from the State Department of Education.
6. Local news media.
7. Local parents' organizations.

ANALYSIS OF DATA

You may look at the data in a variety of ways. One method which is both useful and rapid involves the development of a decision table. Set down the people most directly affected by the decision makers you are attempting to identify (you the teacher, and your pupils). Identify the characteristics of the classroom, the building, the instructional materials, the auxiliary services--all the pertinent facilities and services. Break these into components and determine who decides the quantity and quality of each available to you. Check those decision makers whom you can reach, and establish a list of priority items for their attention.

You have probably reached some tentative conclusions regarding the degree of influence exerted on your school district by various government agencies. The degree for each agency or level of government may be placed on a continuum ranging from little or no effect to rigid authoritarian control. Similarly, your own potential influence will vary greatly. There is no pat formula guaranteed to result in the changes you desire.

One inescapable conclusion is that the school curriculum is responsive to its environment. Every elementary school in the United States exists at the pleasure of some kind of governing board. The majority of their decisions reflect the interests and preferences of their communities. Education has traditionally served as the vehicle by which a society transmits its culture from one generation to another. As teachers we have the dual responsibility of employee of the school system and professional educator. On the one hand we must consider the goals of the community we serve and on the other the educational objectives which we, as professionals, establish. In a democratic society there should be little conflict between the interests of society and the objectives of education. The essence of the relationship resides in the community's responsibility for the implementation of programs to achieve those goals. Put another way, the community largely determines the ends and the professional educators determine the means.

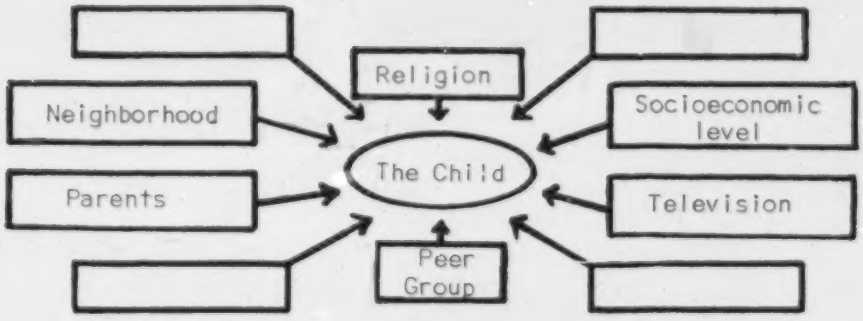
Chapter II - ASSESSMENT IN THE EARLY YEARS

"The children just aren't motivated!" This time honored plaint of educators is evidence of the discontent with what is happening within the classroom. Significantly, it begs the question, "Motivated to do what?" We have already explored the questions of goals and controls. The need to build on children's needs and abilities has been a central focus. As we turn to the actual implementation of assessment procedures in the classroom, the importance of these ideas grows.

Starting the Process

As you described your children earlier in this book, it may have occurred to you that more information gathered previously would have helped in really knowing each individual. We suggest that the assessment process must begin at least as soon as the child is known to the school if it is to help educators provide the best possible experiences--and best match of experiences with needs and abilities.

In applying assessment procedures for pupils, we should keep in mind the many forces which influence them. Educators should recognize that the school is only one of the many forces acting on the pupil's life; what s/he does in school obviously depends on more than the events in the classroom or those activities in his/her day that are in some way controlled by the school. The values, expectations and ways of behaving accepted by significant others in the child's world will in part constitute the field of forces within which the educator hopes to exert influence. Some of the many potential forces have been identified. Supply others that you feel affect the children you work with.



Educators genuinely concerned with pupils and their immediate environments might ask the following questions (6):

1. What is the importance of school for the child among the activities within his/her total day?
2. What is the importance of the teacher compared with other persons in the pupil's life?
3. What attitudes about education and about the school does the child gain from his/her family and from his/her neighborhood?
4. What activities in the pupil's out-of-school life may be competing with school-centered activities for his/her time, energy and emotional commitment?

The assessment system must begin with accurate information about the child. Information can be obtained from school permanent records or from an "information form" designed by the teacher. Such an information form could resemble the following:

PUPIL INFORMATION FORM

1. Name_____
   Address_____
   Telephone Number _____ _____
2. a. Names of brothers:
   _____How old? _____
   _____How old? _____
   _____How old? _____
   b. Names of sisters:
   _____How old? _____
   _____How old? _____
   _____How old? _____
3. Brothers or sisters who have grown up and left home. Circle their age in Question 2.
4. People listed below who live with family? (Please check)
   _____Mother
   _____Father
   _____Stepmother
   _____Stepfather
   _____Other adults
   All together, how many adults live at home? _____
5. Does a sitter stay with you when your mother and father are away from home? YES NO
   a. If yes, is it the same person all the time? YES NO
   b. If yes, is it someone in your family? YES NO
   c. If yes, who is it? _____

Many children have to make frequent adjustments to a new school because their families have moved. Information about previous school attendance can be obtained by adding the following item.

6.

Grade	City or Town	State
Kindergarten		
First Grade		
Second Grade		
Third Grade		
etc.		

Much more could be added to this torm to make it more useful. Other items that could be included are:

1. Ethnic and cultural background of pupil.
2. Physical handicaps.
3. Language spoken at home.
4. Parents' levels of education and occupations.
5. income of parents.
6. Size of home.
7. Religion.
8. Responsibilities of pupil after school hours.
9.
10.
11.
12.

Fill in items 9 through 12 which would represent additional informtion inimical to each child's particular setting.

The collection of demographic data provides an excellent opportunity to initiate home contact. If the Pupil Information Form is accompanied by an invitation to parents which seeks their reactions and suggestions to our instructional program, we can gain vital insights and directions from the outset of the child's educational experience. In other words, "Get to know your children's parents!" Seek their assistance and follow-up on their suggestions. Several of the ideas included in the next section can also be used with parents.

It Never Hurts to Ask

Children are a rich and vital source of direction for instructional planning. They know and can recount many experiences. They can tell us the ones they liked and the ones they didn't. Children can identify experiences they would like to do again. Some volunteer this information. Others require the subtle skill and patience of a Perry Mason to unlock this valuable data.

Let's start with the proposition that any learning experience designed to teach a particular concept has the potential to illustrate many other valuable ideas. How do we decide which experience to use at a given time? The logical answer becomes--the one suggested by the child.

Do not confuse this with a "What do you want to do today?" approach. As responsible professionals we must set the framework for choice. Our concern is that the range of choice is often too narrow. That is, as the big people in the room we make the decisions. Careful examination often shows that the decisions reflect our needs, convenience, wants and the like. Total implementation of an assessment system based on the principles identified thus far can help us alter the source of planning and the process of decision-making, to include children and parents. Most of the activities suggested are implemented directly in the classroom. However, with modifications they could be used by supervisory or administrative personnel in the larger community.

Informal observations provide a useful process when we record key bits of data for reference in decision making. Think of two or three of the children in your class. Why not select three from the end of the list you prepared earlier? Observe these young people as they interact in the classroom for the next two or three days. During each day, take a moment to jot down the following information.

NAME_____ _____

Talks about_____

Plays with - Materials_____

Individuals_____

Selects _____ _____ books

Sits next to_____

Avoids - Materials_____

People_____

Really likes to _____

_____

_____ _____

_____ _____

Add some of your own categories or concerns as they emerge through the observation. If you can't seem to find answers through informal observation--ask!

Extend the information gathered when you begin to ask. Share some of the things you particularly like to do with the child. Don't be reluctant to share your lack of enthusiasm for a particular book, lesson or whatever with the child. Together you may be able to find a better way.

This approach can be carried over into the assessment of the child's development. Neither student initiated nor student involved assessment need await the passage of time until the upper grades. In fact, both can begin as the child enters school for the first time. While visiting pre-school programs in many parts of the country we have learned a great deal by asking the children:

Is this a good place to be?
What's good about it? What's best?
Is there anything about being here that you don't like?

_____

_____

These opening questions offer the opportunity for a very worthwhile conversation. We believe that the question, "Do you like what you're doing?" is an extremely useful way of beginning assessment.

In the early years, a series of learning experiences dealing with feelings can provide much information about children's needs as well as their abilities. We have found that by focusing on six major understandings, and working cooperatively with children to explore them, a great deal can be learned. We have set out the understanding below. Following each there is a space for you to record an idea for a beginning experience. Try it and afterwards fill in the experiences which

followed. At the end are some ideas for assessing the total experience.

I. I have feelings--so do others.

II. There are reasons for my feelings.

III. My feelings often result in actions.

IV. I can choose how I express my feelings.

V. There are different ways I can show my feelings.

VI. I can feel good about how I feel.

VII.

Two useful techniques for assessment following activities focusing on feelings involve the use of visual stimuli and role playing. Children who can attribute feelings to appropriate pictures show initial awareness of the range and variety of feelings present. Discussing a particular picture (e.g., a happy child) or developing a story about a picture reveals the child's ability to deal with consequence and, at a higher level, cause-effect relationships. Asking the child to role play a particular feeling or to dramatize a situation illustrating a feeling permits him/her to demonstrate the level of abstraction of which s/he is capable.

The content of discussions about feelings will reveal much about the child's needs. The way s/he deals with the content reveals a great deal about personal abilities.

Information gained through experiences focusing on feelings plus data gathered through informal interest inventories provides the basis for the development of a sociogram. A sociogram provides a simple visual representation of the relationships among the individuals in a group. Becoming aware of the relationships--positive, negative and even neutral--among group members helps when we are deciding about grouping students for specific activities. It also enables us to help children become aware of human relations problems which they can overcome. Why not draw a sociogram of your class in the space below. For a discussion and examples of sociograms, the following references will prove most helpful:

Crow, Lester D. and Alice Crow, Human Development and Learning. New York: American Book Company, 1956.

Mussen, Paul Henry, John Janeway Conger and Jerome Kagan, Child Development and Personality. New York: Harper & Row Publishers, 1969.

After having followed the text this far, you need a break and so do we. We are going to take some time to reread Robert Mager's useful and interesting book, Developing Attitude Toward Learning (9). Mager's treatment of "approach and avoidance" will add to your understanding of what you've been involved in. If you wish to proceed rather than take a break, we suggest you study Mager's ideas upon completion of this book.

Some Things We Have To Know

Again we turn to the notion that children's needs neither exist nor are satisfied in a vacuum. Within the context of the education environment learning is the key. As mentioned earlier, schools invariably have a testing program designed to produce data about children's cognitive development. Many of our colleagues look askance at these programs. A review of the criticisms of standardized tests would serve no useful purpose at this point. In the final analysis, it is the interpretation of and action based on test scores which makes the difference for the child. As teachers who have accepted the concept of assessment, we realize that measurement data possess inherent weaknesses. We know that such data must be weighed with the results of informal instruments, observations, check lists that we have developed, and with our direct personal knowledge of an individual child on a given day, to produce accurate results. Only then can we facilitate the child's development toward goals we have mutually agreed upon.

Getting to know the child and his/her environment is the first step in deciding the direction as well as procedures which are appropriate for later assessment. This part of the assessment procedure will allow us to proceed with a diagnostic/prescriptive assessment of the pupil's strengths and weaknesses. An assessment of this nature helps us to identify both need and abilities. This data permits us to adjust the program to fit the child or in fact to create a new curriculum.

The following assessment procedure is designed for use with children in the early years. This instrument assesses the child's development in several major areas shown to be important for the child's continued positive growth and development--physically, emotionally and intellectually. The assessment should 1) help the teacher better determine where the child is in key developmental areas, 2) help the teacher better plan a program for that child, and 3) later reassess the effects of that program in order to determine that the child is receiving the best possible education and consideration which can be offered (7).

Diagnostic Component	Prescriptive Component
PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT--GROSS MOTOR	
A. Body	
Is able to	
_____1. point to parts of body when named by teacher	
_____2. name parts of body when touched by teacher	
_____3. name parts of body on request	

B. Face

Is able to

_____1. point to parts of face when named by teacher

_____2. name parts of face when touched by teacher

_____3. name parts of face on request

C. Games

Is able to follow directions in games that in involve left and right concepts (e.g., Simon Says)

_____1. with teacher as model

_____2. with no model

D. Understanding spatial concepts

Is able to place an object in position on request

_____1. in front of, in back of

_____2. over, under

E. _____

_____1.

_____2.

_____3.

Diagnostic Component	Prescriptive Component
COGNITIVE DEVELOPMENT A. Working with colors _____1. can experiment and mix colors with paint _____2. when shown a color (e.g., red) can name three or four items in the room that are the same color _____3. can name colors in traffic signs _____4. can name the colors in clothing that s/he is wearing or that his/her peers are wearing _____5. can recognize and name primary colors (blue, red, yellow), plus black and white	

B. Working with shapes

_____1. can match simple forms

_____2. is able to discuss likenesses and differences seen in animals

_____3. is able to incorporate basic shapes in his/her painting and identify them

_____4. is able to reproduce shape on his/her individual flannel board with yarn or string

_____5. when asked to touch a straight line, circle, square and the like in the room, is able to find these examples

_____6. can show through his/her projects and paintings: line, form, shape, color, size, and texture development

C. _____

_____1.

_____2.

_____3.

Diagnostic Component	Prescriptive Component
AFFECTIVE DEVELOPMENT	
A. Inner control	
_____1. uses tantrums to express feelings	
_____2. tends to cry easily and often	
_____3. is constricted and shy	
_____4. is happy, cheerful and generally open and outgoing	
_____5. can find something funny in a story or situation with adult help	
_____6. frequently finds something funny, laughs and jokes with others	
_____7. almost always sees the humor in situation, able to laugh at self	
_____8. can show or express sympathy with adult help or encouragement	

_____9. can identify own emotion (e.g., "I feel happy," "I feel sad")	
B. Recognizing emotion	
_____1. can show pictures and name them as "happy" or "sad"	
_____2. given a picture showing a recognizable emotion (fear, anger, love, happiness, anxiety, sadness) can use an appropriate word describing what s/he sees	
_____3. after looking at a picture, is able to describe how the picture (or painting) makes him/her feel	
C. _____	
_____1.	
_____2.	
_____3.	

This assessment procedure is incomplete and could have many items added. Each of you are in the best position to expand the instrument to meet the needs of your children.

The teacher does not have to set up individual test situations for each child to collect individual data. In most cases, we can check many of the items quite accurately from memory. Obviously, if we do not remember a child's skills in some area, then we must try to observe the child performing in that area. If we discover that the child never performs in that area of activity, then the instrument has immediately done both the teacher and the child a good turn by bringing this to our attention. We must then bring to bear both our professional experience and available resources in order to provide useful learning experiences.

Conclusion

The idea that everything we find out through testing is to be fitted into a grade, award or punishment for the pupil stands in the way of meaningful assessment. Information obtained should help to diagnose individuals and prescribe.

Too much energy, money and time have been wasted on tests that can be administered to all of the pupils at one time. We have been limited by the overuse of selection-type tests such as multiple response and true/false. While selection-type tests are very useful for some purposes, we can get a variety of information in other ways. Space does not permit extension of additional procedures. The pupil's own statements can be assessed in terms appropriate for the purpose. When we begin our assessment with the question--"What information do we need about pupils and about the learning situation for each of these purposes?"--we are on the road to improving assessment!

Chapter III - ASSESSMENT IN THE MIDDLE YEARS

As the child moves from the early years into the middle years, assessment begins to change. Testing programs become more extensive and in many ways intrusive in grades four through eight. The focus on reading and mathematics skills is broadened to include other curricular areas. What areas are included in your school system's testing program?

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

As curriculum guides become more numerous and complete, the testing program becomes more formal. Standardized tests become increasingly important in the school system's total approach to assessment. Let's note at the outset that we are not prepared to condemn the use of tests of proven quality. We do believe it is important for us as professional educators to know our testing program. First we must be aware of the goals of the school system's testing program for the children we serve. What are the primary goals of your school's testing program?

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

How were these goals established? How are tests selected for use? What role do parents play in the development of the testing program? Return for a moment to the tests you are asked to use. List those you are going to administer to your students this year.

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

Secure a copy of one for review. Don't forget to include a copy of the instructor's manual and the technical manual in your review. A careful reading of these materials helps to reveal uses of test data in our planning for individual children.

Read the students' test booklet. Do you understand the questions? Will your children understand them? Is the content of items relevant to your geographic and/or culture area? How are the results of the formal testing program used? Can these

tests be used to help design individualized learning experiences . . . or only group experiences? We must analyze tests section by section to determine children's strengths and weaknesses. Remember, gross scores or group scores are not what we need.

Who are the people in your system responsible for assisting you to understand and implement the program? Call on them for help. We will leave the question of the formal testing program to you and the support staff as we turn again to assessment in the classroom.

A New Start Is Not Always Best!

Each year brings a new beginning for children and teachers. Many changes occur during the year. Changes mean that records must be updated. As we get to know each child in each new group of children, the techniques suggested earlier are reassessed. Personal information forms once again provide useful information about the needs and abilities of each child. Updating this data may suggest possible shifts. Changes in family status, residence, family income . . . must be known if they are to influence our interaction with the child. A home contact gives additional insight into the context in which the child operates.

Each child has had many new experiences since last year and is in many ways a new person. The child will probably react differently in the new context. We are also, to a degree, new persons. Likewise, all people react differently to other people. These newnesses must be considered.

Colleagues have often told us that they do not read cumulative records or solicit the impressions of a child's former teacher. Their rationale is that each child deserves an even break--what he did before should not be held against him. While the intentions are laudable, the practice ignores fundamental principles of individualized instruction. Progress can hardly be continuous if we are not thoroughly familiar with the base on which we hope to build. (We must realize, however, that cumulative records have limitations and give us only portions of the picture.)

New interests mean new inventories! Dust off the interest inventory you used last year. But don't revise it until you've reviewed the items and adjusted them to reflect changes in the general interests of children in your community. Perhaps the following example of an interest inventory may be useful.

INTEREST INVENTORY

NAME _____

1. What are your hobbies? _____
   _____
   _____

2. What are your favorite sports? _____
   _____
   _____

3. What are your favorite TV programs? _____
   _____
   _____

4. What are your favorite foods? _____

5. What are your favorite subjects in school? _____

6. What kind of stories do you like to read? _____

7. What are your favorite songs? _____

8. What games do you enjoy the most in school? _____

9. What places should the class visit? _____

10. What are your favorite activities in school? _____

11. _____

12. _____

An interest inventory of this nature, when used as a supplement to the Pupil Information Form (see page 23), can give the teacher definite curriculum direction and information on his/her pupils. It should be noted that an interest inventory is valuable only when it provides answers to questions teachers may have about their pupils in relation to the curriculum. It is very possible for an interest inventory to become obsolete and useless.

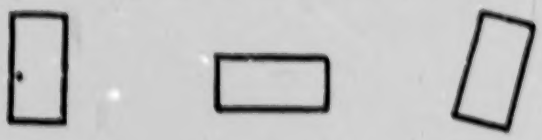
Depending upon the ability of the pupils, information for the inventory can be obtained through interviews and observations. Questions can be worded in such a way to require a "Yes" or "No" answer or a lengthy response. Interested readers may find it useful to refer to the Kuder Preference Inventory for a better view of an interest inventory.

The examples presented are very broad and general. This was purposely done to allow the reader to use it as a beginning point for more specificity. Each of the examples could easily have several additional sub-questions.

Equipped with up-to-date personal information and complete interest inventories we are ready to move ahead with our children.

But Everyone Will Succeed!

One of the strangest concerns we have encountered while discussing assessment with colleagues centers on the actual testing activity. Many educators have indicated that a major problem in testing is finding a "different way" to present the materials. Further discussion reveals that they do not wish to use exercises identical to those encountered during instruction for testing purposes--"or else everyone will pass!" For example, experiences designed to strengthen the oral use and understanding of the spoken word are often evaluated through spelling tests. When testing to determine whether a concept has been mastered we must use materials and/or strategies similar to those used during instruction. Don't trick the child. The following example illustrates the dirty tricks approach to testing (unless our goal had been object/label transfer). After being taught the concept of "set" using only a wide variety of concrete objects, the children were tested through the use of written representations of those objects.

Instruction:  = RECTANGLES

Test: DOOR WINDOW WALL = ?

We believe the purpose of any classroom test should be to determine the current standing of an individual child in relation to cooperatively pre-determined objectives. Each test ought to contribute to an assessment system which yields information that helps us increase the probability that the child will continue to progress.

Consider the following teacher-child interactions:

Teacher: Today we are going to see if we really know about our environment. Let's start by looking more closely at things in the room. (Pointing to the door.) Harold, what do you see?

Harold: A piece of wood.

Teacher: No Harold, I mean, what shape do you see?

An Alternative

Teacher: Today we are going to see what shapes appear in our environment. Let's start by looking more closely at things in the room. (Pointing to the door.)

Harold: A piece of wood.

Teacher: You're right, Harold. Remember we're looking for shapes. Can you tell us the shape of the door?

The needs of both teacher and child are better served when we avoid the "I've got a secret" instructional technique. When we hide the real objective we invite failure. Children experience enough failure in their lives to impress us with the need to try to decrease its occurrence in our classrooms.

What do you have planned for your children today?

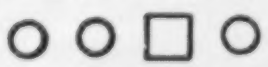
- _____
- _____
- _____

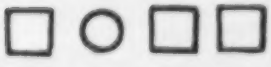
Is it good for them? _____ How do you know?

- _____
- _____
- _____

Sharing your objectives with the children will enhance the probability of reaching them. Identifying the objectives will provide indications of procedures for assessment. A specific technically sound example illustrates the process. Duffy and Sherman in their recent work, Systematic Reading Instruction (4), provide the following objective as the first in a series of learning experiences.

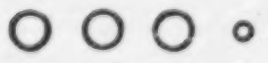
- The Performance Objective. Given three geometric figures that are exactly alike and one that is clearly different, the learner marks the one that is different.
- The Pretest. Direct the learner to indicate (mark or point to as appropriate) which figure in the following sets is different. Criterion for mastery is 80 percent.

Set I 

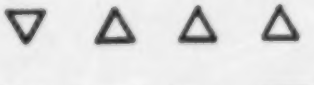
Set II 

Set III

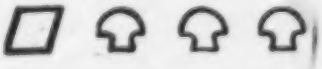
Set IV

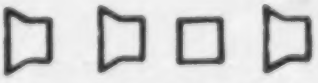
Set V 

Set VI

Set VII 

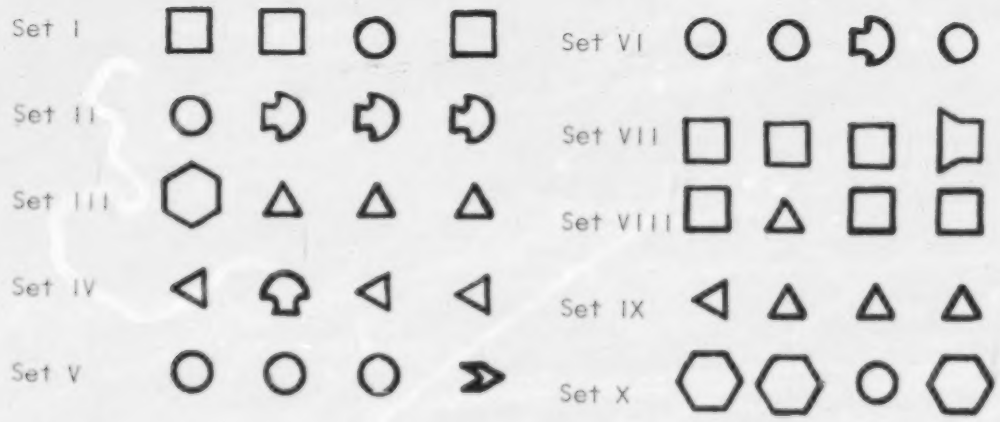
Set VIII

Set IX 

Set X 

(Alternative instructional techniques and learning experiences designed to achieve the objective are then provided.)

- The Posttest. Same directions and criterion for mastery as on the pretest.



The tests are very similar. They ought to be; they are assessing the same objective. If the objective had referred to the transfer of understanding to a different medium, e.g., the spoken word, the test would not be appropriate. The degree to which a test measures what it says it measures indicates the validity. A valid test measures what it claims to measure. But a test cannot be valid unless it is reliable. Reliability is based on the degree of consistency with which the test measures what ever it measures.

Using a ruler to measure the length of a piece of string is both valid (a ruler indicates length) and reliable (the ruler is standardized and will not change appreciably). Using a friend to measure the length of the same piece of string may be valid (s/he may use the same ruler we used) but is reliable only if s/he gets the same result.

Who is the outstanding child in your room?

Who does the teacher in the room next to you think is the outstanding child in your class?

Who does the building principal think is the outstanding child in your class?

Are the measures used to identify this/these children valid and reliable? We have found that resources do exist that can help us with the basic concepts of tests and measurements. Rather than burden you with an exhaustive list of publications, here are two that may prove useful additions to your school's professional library.

Storey, Arthur G., The Measurement of Classroom Learning. Chicago, Ill: Science Research Associates, 1970.

Storey provides a comprehensive view of measurement in the classroom. He deals with the basic questions and issues as well as construction of specific kinds of tests.

Mehrens, William A. and Irvin J. Lehman, Standardized Tests in Education. New York, N.Y., Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1969.

The authors provide insights helpful to educators who are concerned with the need to administer standardized measures

and who are aware of the problems attached to their use. Specific tests are thoroughly reviewed.

Do It Yourself

Ultimately the tests used in our classroom are our own. We develop many assessment tools and procedures each year. We also interpret and decide the effect of test data on instructional programs. Think for a moment about the way you used the last batch of information about your class sent to you from the testing office. Did you use it at all? Perhaps some system wide in-service is needed. Our purpose is not to change assessment based on a combination of teacher-made and system-wide testing but to strengthen its effect.

Our first suggestion is don't do this alone! Very few of us are competent test constructors. However we can become competent assessors through attending to several cuations, through practice and through depending on help from our friends. Use the technical resources available to you. If the individuals charged with responsibility for testing can't seem to work you into their schedule, return to the discussion on decisions developed earlier (pages 19-21) and make it happen.

How about an eye-opener? Ask your students to suggest ways that they might demonstrate their understanding of the learning experiences they are currently involved in. (The remainder of this study/action publication can wait until you return.) How do the ways developed by the children compare to tests you have used recently? Perhaps some focal points would help. How about:

Content? _____

Format? _____

Style? _____

Length? _____

Clarity? _____

_____ _____

_____ _____

What is your initial reaction regarding potential validity and reliability of the children's tests? Use them just for fun and for testing your own perceptions.

It is now time to review the most recent assessment procedures you have developed and used. Use the same frame of reference as above.

Content _____

. Does it reflect your objectives--what was actually taught?

Format _____

. Was the arrangement of items or the procedure easy for the children to follow, or are we testing test-taking ability?

Style _____

. Are the children comfortable in the assessment setting?

Length _____

. Is the length of the tool or procedure and the time provided adjusted so that all children can finish?

Clarity _____

- Is the meaning of each item easily understood?
- Is there clearly one answer to each question designed to have one answer? (Recall the door/piece of wood example?)

Validity _____

- Did you measure what you set out to measure? How do you know?

Reliability _____

- If you used the tool or procedure again, would you get the same results?

_____ _____

Having reviewed assessment procedures developed by our students as well as ourselves we ought to be ready to call for help. Your reaction to your students' assessment suggestions will determine the extent to which a very valuable resource will be used. When the learner is involved in the initial definition and development of goals of instruction and learning experiences, learning is much more apt to occur. Chances are less certain when both goals and experiences are dictated by someone else.

A fourth grade student asks, "Why do the street lights go on at a different time each day?" This student has identified a learning objective. A responsive teacher with a sensitivity to the full potential for learning inherent in the question might develop learning experiences dealing with concepts such as climate, weather, electricity, government and social relations in a community. The potential is great! Is the child's curiosity? How much is enough? Why not ask the person who initiated the experience? "Because it gets dark at different times" may satisfy me. You may want to know more.

Our most helpful colleagues in the whole matter of assessment may be the children. The fact that they can tell us what they like leads to the probability that they can tell us why and how much. We might start by asking the children to help us complete the activity on objectives which follows shortly.

Don't forget the professionals. The individuals in your school system charged with the responsibility for testing can be very helpful. They can give advice on improving the quality of tests particularly with regard to validity and reliability. They can also help us interpret test scores and show us wyas to examine the way individual children respond to sepcific questions or sections of standardized tests. We often encounter children who score poorly on math tests because they cannot read the examples. We have not tested their math competence; we have partially tested their reading ability. Competent specialists can readily identify these problems and help us assess test data.

Despite the popular notion that all nursery schools, all kindergartens, all elementary schools are pretty much alike--they are not. They are as different as the people who inhabit and interact within them. Each bases its instructional programs, hence its assessment system, on local priorities. Each is interpreted according to the style of the individual administrators and teachers involved. This variation precludes the development of definitive or universally applicable assessment techniques. We have to do it ourselves. But in keeping with the

concepts developed so far let's try to do it together.

Identify something that you expect to assess in your classroom within the near future. _____

What objectives do you expect to achieve through the learning experiences related to your answer?

Objective #1 _____

_____

Objective #2 _____

_____

Objective #3 _____

_____

Briefly describe several of the learning experiences you expect to use to reach these objectives.

Experience #1 _____

_____

Experience #2 _____

_____

Experience #3 _____

_____

We have found that our colleagues are able to identify many different ways of assessing a particular child's progress toward a specified objective. What procedures occur to you as you consider objectives and experiences?

. multiple choice test

. observation

. group discussion

. parent questionnaire

.

.

.

.

.

What are the plusses and minuses for your children associated with each procedure? Do you have to use the same procedure with each child? Select one procedure and, on a separate sheet of paper, rough out a sample procedure and/or instrument.

Let's take a look at what you've got.

. Are the questions or tasks realistic?

- Do the questions reflect major concepts or trivia?
- Will the children understand the language?
- Are there any trick questions? (Get rid of them!)
- Does each item or each section stand alone?
- Can the children answer the questions without memorizing a textbook?

If you feel good about the product, do two more things: 1) give it to a colleague to get reactions; and 2) wait a day or two and review it again. If you still feel positive about it--use it.

On the day you use the procedure or instrument, fill in the following form.

ASSESSMENT DAY

Date:

How do you feel today? _____

What is the weather like? _____

How are the children acting? _____

Who is absent? _____

Who is acting out of sorts? _____

Did anything unusual occur today? _____

_____

Is there anything else that might influence the performance of any one child? _____

_____

_____

_____

But using or administering the procedure or tool is only half the battle. How are you going to score or evaluate it? And how are you going to use the results? Return to your list of objectives--that's where you should find the criteria for success. The degree of proficiency, number or proportion of correct responses and the like should be assigned at the time the objective is written. If you've included them, the probability that your instrument is valid is increased markedly. If not, it's back to the drawing board. However, you're way ahead of the game. After all, you have risked personal dissatisfaction by questioning yourself. You have also begun a search for alternatives with the child's needs and abilities as the central focus. You deserve both a pat on the back and a change of pace.

Pick up a copy of Mager's, Developing Attitude Toward Learning (9) and read it.

In closing this section, we cannot resist the temptation to share a couple of assessment experiences with you--one dealing with content, the other with process.

A colleague concluded a fifth grade history unit with a fill-in-the-blank

type test. One question and its unexpected although apparently correct response read:

Abraham Lincoln was born in Original Sin .

. The context does make a difference.

Another colleague, curious about written work completed by his son as part of a first grade learning exercise, tried to determine why the paper had been marked "C" although all of the answers appeared to be correct. The answer--SMUDGE MARKS. That's right--

0 smudge marks = A
1-2 smudge marks = B
3-5 smudge marks = C

Hopefully the youngster mastered coloring within the lines before he was too far gone. Do you suppose the teacher developed learning experiences to reduce the frequency of smudge marks? After all, if the results of assessment do not influence the future their benefits are marginal.

Chapter IV - ASSESSMENT IN PROFESSIONAL LIFE

For our purposes, education personnel are all those individuals, other than students, who have an official relationshiop to the educational program. Thus, teachers, principals, curriculum specialists and so on are always considered education personnel by virtue of their role definition. These are individuals generally recognized both in the community and in the profession as members of the education team. These are also the individuals most often evaluated in the school system. We feel that this concept of education personnel is inadequate.

Consider for a moment the private citizen who serves as a part time member of the local school board. What about the outside consultant to the curriculum revision project? Likewise, consider the college of education faculty member who is involved in local in-service activities. It appears that when these individuals are acting in the roles designated above, they are clearly included within the definition. The contribution each makes to the educational program ought to be recognized. Recognition implies awareness, assessment and decision-making. We hold that they are part of the group that is the focus of this section.

Setting the Stage

This section is being written immediately following a visit to a private nursery and elementary school. During the course of the visit, our hostess described her staff in glowing terms. "All but two have bachelors degrees," she said. "Several are working on graduate degrees. But more importantly, each is a really good teacher!" When pressed to describe what she meant by "good teacher," she responded speaking about sensitivity and empathy for children. She also indicated that she was extremely "careful" in her selection process. Careful about what? That they seem to reflect a specific philosophy, perform in a certain way . . . ? The dialogue was an echo of many held in schools across the country during the past several years.

Each of us has encountered individuals labelled "good teacher," "good principal," "good superintendent." However, the specification of criteria remains unclear. We do know that the unspecified criteria exist because of the high degree of reliability achieved when peer rating is employed. That is, when colleagues are asked to select the top five teachers on their staff or the bottom five, agreement often exceeds 95%. While some of this may be tied to a halo effect, the occurence is encountered often enough in research to be accepted as evidence that professional judgment is indeed based on some undefined common set of criteria. The time and energy necessary to explicitly state those criteria completely has not been taken.

The result is assessment on the one hand by intuition and on the other for survival. One gets ahead by somehow intuiting the criteria applied by his/her supervisor (or teacher) or by living to start a new school year. Professional educators have never been satisfied with this approach. We decry its effect on ourselves and most critically on children. It appears that we face a choice: accept the present situation or work to establish a system that reflects what ought to be. We, the authors, opt for an attempt at change.

The Question of Competence

The staff of Teaching Research at Monmouth, Oregon has defined competence as:

> *A demonstrated capability for producing the outputs associated with a specific role to the standards held by the context in which that role is performed.*

Dissected

> *A demonstrated capability*
> *for producing the outputs*
> *associated with a specific role*
> *to the standards*
> *held by the context*
> *in which that role is performed*

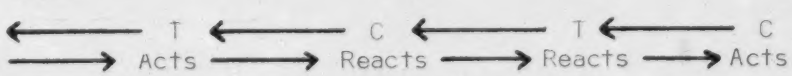
Note the relationship between the statements describing the process of assessment and this definition. At a time when many are bandying the term competence about, its meaning has become confused. Efforts to achieve greater educational benefits through judicious use of available resources have made competence the watchword of the accountability movement. Unfortunately, competence or lack of competence has been equated all too often only with scores on tests of substantive knowledge, student scores, college transcripts and the like. Often we hear competence spoken about along with management by objectives and per unit costs, cost effectiveness and PERT charts as if the technology designed to insure uniform quality among hundreds of items flowing from an industrial production line transfers directly to the classroom where each person is by definition different--the product of differing elements assembled differently according to individual needs.

Basing assessment on the posited definition of competence means that we start with a role definition. What is the role of the individual--student and teacher? The second consideration is the environment. What does the curriculum, physical plant, psychological atmosphere, and the like look like? A third consideration is outputs.

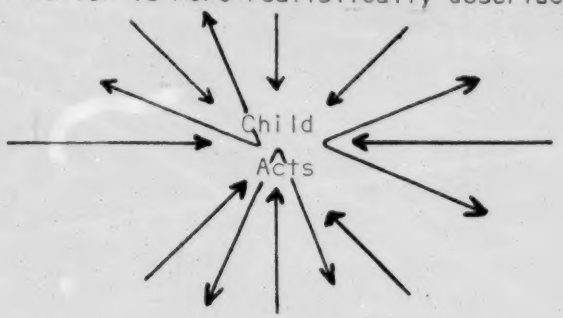
The most casual perusal of the literature reveals tremendous variation in outputs expected from one school curriculum to another. Add the further variance among schools purporting to use the same curriculum and the conclusion is inescapable--competence cannot be defined beyond the specified context. This reinforces the decision to assess rather than measure or evaluate.

But let us for a moment redefine context. Suppose context were to consist of school programs. In that case, we must search out those elements of competence which are generalizable and make them the basis of assessment. To keep the discussion open, we must assume this is possible. This leads to the consideration of outputs.

When one speaks of the production of desired outputs in school curricula, s/he usually refers to learning--change in behavior of individuals. The assumption is that what a teacher does does make a difference. The interaction may be described simplistically as:



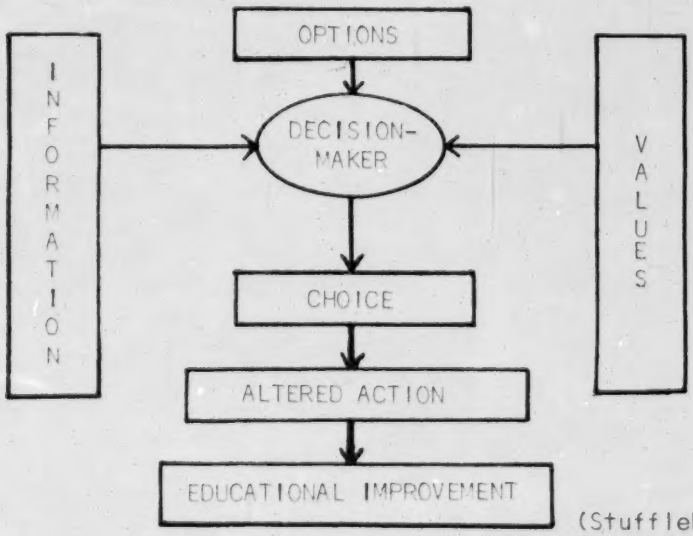
We know that the situation is more realistically described as:



Each vector represents an additional variable acting upon the child with varying degrees of frequency and magnitude. Research has shown that only about five percent of a child's learning can be directly proven to result from the teacher input. Other variables mask the teacher effect. So many things are happening to the learner and so many individuals are involved that it is difficult to know which actually produces a change in the child. Does a new word in his/her functional vocabulary come from the teacher, a peer, parent, television, radio . . . ? Thus, focusing upon child behavior, the ultimate criteria will not give sufficient information about teacher competence. We must search out additional evidence of professional competence. The search opens many questions about decisions and decision-makers, justice and humanity. We will attempt to deal with these matters in the remainder of this publication. Principles of assessment as well as processes encountered in earlier sections focusing on children apply equally to professional personnel.

Getting Organized

The single most important factor in successful assessment is organization. Having based our discussion on the premise that the overriding purpose of assessment is decision-making, it may be helpful to consider the following schematic representation.



(Stufflebeam et al 1971)

The model is applicable in each of the areas considered in this paper. The decision-maker may change as will the nature of the choices involved and the resulting altered action. Similarly, educational improvements will consist of a wide variety of effects. When the focus is on education personnel, examples might include but are not limited to:

Decision-Maker(s)	Choices	Improvements
Personnel Officer	Recommends Hire - Not Hire	Staff Quality
Instructional Supervisor	Positive Evaluation Negative Evaluation	Potential Promotion Staff Quality
Building Principal	Recommend Hire - Not Hire Promote - Not Promote	Potential Employment Potential Promotion Staff Quality
Board of Education	Hire - Not Hire Promote - Not Promote Retain - Dismiss	Staff Quality Staff Morale
_____	_____	_____
	_____	_____
	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
	_____	_____
	_____	_____

You will be able to add to each category based on personal experience. The examples clearly reflect a traditional view of decision-making in education. We will attempt to expand the concept to more adequately meet the needs of contemporary education. Accepting the concept of decision-making forces us to again pursue the question, "Assessment for what?" In other words, what are the educational improvements sought in a given community? The following suggestions are expansions of those identified by Redfern (14).

"TOOLING-UP"

Exploratory Contacts With	BOARD OF EDUCATION	ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF	INSTRUCTIONAL STAFF	PARENTS COMMUNITY REPRESENTATIVES
To Determine				
NEED FOR ASSESSMENT	(a) To know better and more accurately how effective performance is for a specific education role (b) To enable education personnel to know "how they stand" (c) To make appraisal a more systematic and professional process			
PURPOSES OF ASSESSMENT	(a) To assess status and quality of performances in specific roles (b) To identify aspects of performance needing improvement (c) To stimulate growth and development			

PROCESSES OF ASSESSMENT	(a)	To define the nature of a particular role
	(b)	To establish primary job targets plus criteria for judging other areas of performance
	(c)	To indicate process of making decisions
	(d)	To clarify role of assessee, assessor
	(e)	To determine purposes of self-assessment; evaluation by assessor
	(f)	To show purpose of assessment conference
RESULTS OF ASSESSMENT	(a)	To be better aware of the quality of performance
	(b)	To strengthen performance where needed
	(c)	To be able to report to Board of Education the status of performance
	(d)	To provide "evidence" on which to base rewards
	(e)	To provide "evidence" required for termination of incompetent personnel

The objectives of this process should be to determine the objectives, the individuals to be involved, the procedures to be used and the time sequence of activities. It is important to keep in mind from the outset that educational improvements imply change. The possibility of change makes those individuals involved vulnerable. A search for competence opens the possibility that incompetence will be discovered. The development of a useful assessment system depends first upon involvement. However, involvement is not sufficient. Reduction of anxiety or of outright opposition depends on clear, published organizational goals, allocation of resources adequate to train evaluators, provision of adequate time to perform required tasks, and clear statements of relationships between stated goals and assessment tasks. Staff morale cannot be high if personnel are anxious or hostile to the process. Since unknowns contribute to fear, assessment programs which have written and published statements of purpose that are clear, precise and complete are more likely to produce a sound basis for open communication and cooperative relationships than programs designed around ambiguous or unwritten purposes.

This form of needs assessment will do more than provide a first step in the development of an assessment system. The major benefit may be a refocusing of institutional goals. Statements of educational philosophy, goals and objectives often become outdated as the population of students and professional personnel changes. The initiation of a comprehensive assessment system provides an opportunity to answer the prior question, "Why does our school exist?" Reflect on earlier responses to this question.

Establishing Assessment Criteria

Establishing criteria for assessment refocuses our attention to the question, "Who decides?" Ideally, each person affected by the process should participate in the decisions, just as with children. Since the decisions will hopefully result in educational improvements, each person who has a stake in the quality of a community's educational program ought to be involved. Stakeholders include children, parents, teachers, administrators, school board members, the community at large and state departments of education. Clearly total representation is a logistical impossibility except in the smallest school districts or on an individual school basis. Consequently, a representative group must be formed. Bolton (2) addresses the problem as follows:

Who will decide? - Criteria based on an individual's intuitive judgment are built on the weakest of foundations; consequently, criteria decisions would be improved if based on the pooled judgment of experts. Ryans (15, p. 42) points out that the group of experts (jury of authorities) may consist of:

1. The totality of the known group of authorities or experts (e.g., all of the principals and supervisors in the school district, all members of a teacher's professional organization, all college teachers of a specified subject matter, etc.) Of course, such a procedure usually is not feasible unless the totality of experts is relatively small.
2. A random sample from the roster or membership list of a known group of authorities.
3. A purposive sample drawn from the totality of authorities as defined.
4. A sample of individuals who have been specially trained to make authoritative judgments regarding the criterion (e.g., job analysts, trained observers, etc.).

In education, method 3 probably is most often employed; however, Ryans suggests that it is the weakest of the four. He also warns that methods 1, 2 and 4 do "not necessarily insure valid criterion description, but they represent distinct improvements." (15, p. 43).

The comments presented by Ryans are summarized as a caution. "Inadequate statements describing what is important in teacher behavior often result from using biased judges" (15, p. 43). Bolton (2) states the conclusion as follows: "Involving teachers as well as other members of the educational community in the development of criteria may help establish more accurately defined criteria and may improve the morale of the professional staff." These comments, cautions and conclusions are clearly applicable in developing criteria for assessing performance in each and every role necessary to deliver quality education. They provide a good start. But once again good is not sufficient.

The Development Committee

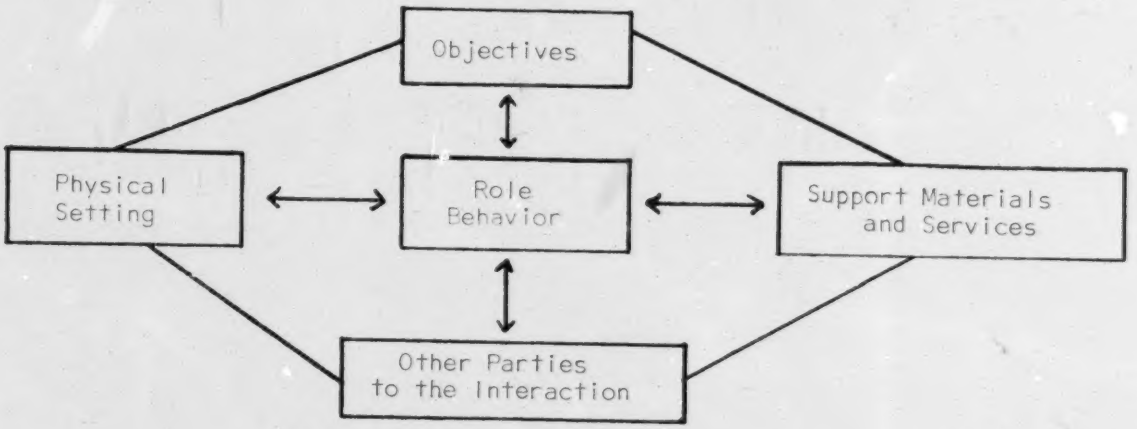
We would opt as a first step for a representative committee charged with the responsibility of developing the overall design of the assessment system but would extend membership beyond the traditional role groups mentioned above. The tasks of this committee would focus on general concerns rather than specific role responsibilities.

The initial task of the development committee would be to catalogue the identifiable roles currently being played in the system. The system personnel office should serve as a resource in identifying roles and providing descriptions where they exist.

The second task of the development committee would be to assign the task of reviewing existing role descriptions or developing descriptions where none exist to subcommittees composed primarily of, but not limited to, individuals currently employed in those roles. The development committee would provide leadership in this activity by establishing format and insuring that the process is open to suggestions from all parties directly affected by the performance of a role. (For example, children and parents can tell us whether school facilities are kept in good repair. For those of you who exclaim--"But what about . . . ?"--read on.)

A third task of the development committee is to identify the different settings in which the role is played. This activity will provide information about those aspects of the environment which assist or limit successful performance of any given role. (For example, schools with ample budgets for landscaping and repairs will probably be viewed by children and parents as being kept in better repair than those struggling to meet basic operational expenses.)

The following drawing represents personnel behavior and various situational variables (modified from Schalock's 1967 model).



This takes us back directly to the definition of assessment proposed earlier as well as the suggested definition of competence. The important point to note is that the environmental variables must be considered. Thus, the demonstrated ability to perform the skills or to demonstrate knowledge and attitude associated with a particular role does not guarantee that an individual will successfully reach the objectives assigned to the role. (A counselor may know the principles of good counseling and demonstrate empathy with his/her clients and yet lose one to the pressure of peers.) This does not excuse professional educators from making the attempt to identify "what makes a difference."

Criterion Committee

The criterion committee identified for each role should include:

1. Representation of each group of stakeholders in the role.
2. A majority of the committee drawn from those performing the role. (We leave the creative solution to the problem of the committee and the Superintendent to local imagination.)
3. Representatives of supporting services from both within and without the system serving in advisory or ex officio capacity.

Each criteria committee should be given responsibility for developing:

- Specific behaviors in terms of knowledges, attitudes and skills associated with a given role.
- Specific results which the role behaviors are expected to elicit.
- Specific procedures for the collection of data which reflects an individual's ability to perform the role behaviors in the environment in which s/he is employed.
- Specific ways to measure the role behaviors and the results as well as methods of comparing actual and desired results.

In each case, the criteria committee must attend to four dimensions of the individual's ability to perform a role: the role in context, the role player as a person, the role player in relationship to the community, and the role player in relationship to the profession. Omission of any of these considerations will seriously diminish the effect of assessment. Similarly, the procedures agreed upon must include those characteristics outlined in the opening section of this paper. They may be summarized in a procedure that is overt and precise, yet incomplete.

Characteristics

We believe first of all that it is humane to be overt. If we are going to judge the performance of another it appears most humane to inform him/her of the objectives as well as the criteria of success. It also seems reasonable to accept the reaction of the individual in shaping both the objectives and the procedures used in assessment. Thus humaneness requires an open, collaboratively developed, well publicized assessment system.

Secondly, it is rational to be precise. If one person is using some set of referents to evaluate the performance of another, reason dictates that success may be enhanced by defining purposes and procedures in clear, concise language. Once again it is reasonable that each party be involved in defining terms in order to enhance communications.

Third, it is impossible to be absolutely complete when defining a system to assess an individual. This is due in large measure to the very personal nature of any human activity. Observing an athlete set a new world record, the spectator is struck by the obvious success whereas the athlete may feel s/he fell short of his/her full potential. Thus a teacher may give a virtuoso performance and his/her class fail to perform. On the other hand, occasionally efforts judged personally mediocre may meet the student's needs and result in superior performance. In

each instance, we would agree that knowing what might constitute good performance and being able to demonstrate those things increases the probability of superior performance. Knowing how to read increases the probability of superior performance. Knowing how to read increases the probability that our reader will understand our message but does not guarantee accurate communication.

The procedures available for collecting data are as wide and as varied as are the individuals and groups who have contemplated the question of competent performance and quality education. Among the possible techniques, six stand out:

- Free response--statements of what is important and the degree of importance, based upon the general impressions held by various members of the educational community.
- Checklist response--individuals indicate what is important and the degree of importance, on a previously compiled list of desired behaviors and outcomes.
- Position analysis--detailed systematic description of what is important for success and the degree of importance by individuals trained in carrying out such an analysis.
- Critical incidents description--detailed descriptions of actual incidents and behavior that have been observed by experts to be "critical" in learner growth and development. (Note: This technique primarily deals with teacher behavior as opposed to learner outcomes.)
- Time sampling--detailed tabulation of teacher behaviors based upon systematic observation and recording, with special attention to the conduct of observation during representative samples in time.
- Psychophysical methods--members of the jury determine what is important and the degree of importance using such methods as ranking and paired comparisons (15, p. 44).

Traditionally, evaluation of professional personnel has focused on the use of free-response or check lists to provide data on individual response. While these procedures yield some useful data reflecting the priorities held by individuals or groups of experts, they do not meet the criteria laid out in the characteristics stated earlier. Psychophysical methods include some of the same weaknesses but provide an opportunity to include environmental effects and the benefits of pooled judgments. Critical incidents and time sampling provide useful data but are limited by the focus of the incident or the category system employed. Position analysis provides useful information about the specific role responsibilities but does not consider situation variables.

In short, there is no single approach which yields adequate data for decision-making about professional competence. Rather, a variety of procedures deemed appropriate within the local context must be combined to provide a comprehensive system. Once again we refer the reader to the assumptions and characteristics which form the basis of our discussion.

The net effect of these considerations should result in an assessment system in which data are collected by a variety of individuals using different procedures over a period of time. These data are then compared to the established criteria by the group or individual charged with decision-making responsibility.

Administering the System

It is important to remember that we are discussing a very human enterprise. The very act of decision-making represents the acceptance of a required behavior associated with a particular role. The professional educator charged with decision-making responsibility seeks the best available data on which to base decisions; therefore, we are faced with another option in developing the comprehensive assessment system. Does the decision-maker receive the raw data yielded by the individual assessment procedures and apply professional judgment to make a choice? Or does the decision-maker receive a recommendation from a central assessment committee whose responsibility is to analyze the data yielded in terms of the specified criteria? We believe that in either case, professional judgment must be exercised. You must decide the point at which it is appropriate.

In either case, administration of a successful assessment system demands continuous communication to assure that the human relations of assessee to assessor are positive as well as productive for educational improvement on the personal, program and system levels. The individual or group charged with responsibility for administering the assessment system must work with the individual role players to insure that their assessment roles are clearly understood. The following expansion of Redfern's earlier mentioned ideas (14, p. 35) provides useful suggestions.

Roles of:

Assessee	Administering Individual or Group
1. Understand exactly what will be expected	1. Communicate precisely what will be expected
(a) How job is defined (b) "Major" job targets (c) Procedure	
2. Know how to proceed in independent action during year	2. Determine what specific contacts to make with individual during year
3. Understand relationship of assessment to supervision	3. Clarify relationship of assessment to supervision
4. Understand how assessment will be made	4. Explain how assessment will be made
5. Keeping in touch with the assessors during the year	5. Keeping in close contact with assessee during the year

The attitude of the administering individual or group is of utmost importance to the success of the enterprise. A positive approach is imperative. We must seek to build on strengths and to overcome weaknesses. We must reject the notion of assessment as a means of excluding individuals in whatever role. Our view must be to the future rather than the past. Again Redfern provides a useful starting point (14, p. 40).

1. What went well during the year--consolidate the gains.

2. What didn't work out so well--make possible corrections.
3. What other aspects of performance need improvement--establish "new targets."
4. What specific "projects" should assessee undertake--assess feasibility.
5. What administrative and supervisory responsibilities need strengthening--plan for accomplishment.
6. Is there a sense of forward movement--strive for it.
7. Was the assessment process effective--seek to make it even more so.

In Conclusion

The conclusion of the assessment process is in two parts: a decision about an individual and an analysis of the total assessment system. The decision about the individual will hopefully involve the individual and result in an educational improvement. Analysis of the system will hopefully result in an improved system. In education, successful achievement of objectives is seldom an individual accomplishment. By the same token, failure is seldom an individual responsibility. For example, the process we have suggested may result in the determination that an individual can demonstrate the knowledges, attitudes and skills attributed to a particular role only to reveal that the list was inaccurate. That is, s/he can do what was asked but it doesn't make a difference. Clearly we have the responsibility to begin anew to define more appropriately the role in question. More importantly, the system has the responsibility to assist the individual to refocus existing knowledge, attitudes and skills or develop new ones through continuing in-service activities. As stated earlier, professional assessment depends upon the allocation of sufficient resources to do the job. This will not occur until we as professionals develop a comprehensive approach to the question. We have attempted to suggest a process for getting started, some problems to avoid and characteristics to include.

APPENDIX A - DEFINITIONS

Measurement--The application of a standard to a set of data.

> In measurement there is an assumption that the same characteristics (IQ, memory, etc.) can be measured in all men--no matter what their background--and that the characteristics can be measured in an analogous way at different times and in different places (1).

Valid and reliable measurement is based upon the development of standard stimuli, tasks and questions. An individual's response to these standard stimuli, tasks and questions is judged by trained test administrators in terms of quantifiable characteristics such as speed and accuracy. The results of measurement are reported in quantitative terms such as IQ, raw score and time of response. The meaning of these terms is established by comparing the results produced by similar individuals responding to the standard stimuli, tasks and questions.

Measurement is used primarily to classify or predict. This requires the identification of a small set of characteristics, dimensions or measures which provide sufficient data for these judgments to be made. Efficiency is the strength of measurement. Its weakness may be found in the inadequacy of the standardized units, sampling procedures and systems which account for the variation of a large number of characteristic knowledges, skills and attitudes from time to time and place to place. For educators the key weaknesses relate to the inadequacy of standard measures when considering human variables. Measurement as the sole, or even as the central, aide to decision-making in education is rejected.

Evaluation--The consideration of a set of measurement data in terms of specified priorities for change.

Evaluation is based on three major assumptions. First, change in students is desirable. Second, the direction the change ought to take can be established. Third, the amount of change from one time to another can be measured.

Due to the focus on directional change--for example, expanding vocabulary--tests are administered at two points in time. Since it was impossible to measure all of the changes occurring in students, the focus has been narrowed to the objectives of instruction. As the objectives of instruction become more varied, the nature and types of evidence of change become more valid. Evaluation evidence therefore often includes student products, descriptions of processes in which they have engaged and evidence of behaviors demonstrated in a variety of situations.

> Evaluation follows the objectives of instruction. Therefore, to the extent that objectives differ from teacher to teacher, school to school or curriculum to curriculum, it is necessary to devise evaluation procedures appropriate to the specific situations. A single standardized test may not be equally appropriate to all situations (1, p. 28).

Clearly evaluation provides data about the individual's progress toward stated objectives. However, additional information is also developed which indicates the value of the means used to reach that objective. Therefore, evaluation procedures help to determine the effectiveness of a particular curriculum, course, learning experience or teacher.

To appraise the change in individuals or groups it is necessary to establish a method which tells us whether the instructional objectives have been met. The standard used may be similar to measurement, i.e., changes in similar groups attempting to achieve the same objective. It may be an absolute criterion-reference standard, i.e., the individual did or did not achieve the objective. Or it may consist of or include the changes in the individual as a standard, i.e., the amount of change during one period of time compared to change during another period of time.

> In measurement, the environment is a source of error in the scores or attainments of the individuals being measured. In evaluation, the environment (instruction, class, school) is assumed to be a major source of the changes. Ideally, evaluation is as much concerned with the characteristics of the environment that produces the change as it is with the appraisal of the changes in the individuals who are interacting with the environment. In practice, the evaluator frequently limits himself to a description of the environment while he appraises the changes taking place in the individuals.
>
> One major use of evaluation has been to classify individuals for purposes of grading, certification and placement or pormotion. Perhaps of equal importance is the use of evaluation to determine the effectiveness of a method of instruction, a specific course, curriculum or program, or a specific instructor. Evaluation may be used in educational experimentation, and it can be used as a method for maintaining quality control in education.
>
> Perhaps the major difference between measurement and evaluation is the recognition (and utilization) of the effects of testing on the persons involved. Characteristically, measurement strives to limit or control the effects of testing on the student performance. Measurement's concern with "equal opportunity" usually is directed to limiting or equalizing the opportunity students have to learn about the sample of problems on which they will be tested. In contrast, in evaluation there is a more explicit concern with student growth or change and with the *utilization* of the effects of testing to promote such change. Thus, it is recognized that both teachers and students can be motivated to teach and learn by the nature of the tests they anticipate will be used; this effect can be maximized or minimized as desired. Furthermore, the translation of objectives into testing situations and, in turn, such operational definitions can focus on and

> intensify the development by teacher and students of these desired characteristics. Also, the frequency of testing and its use for feedback purposes can do much to enhance the development of the desired characteristics in students (1, p. 29).

Used properly, evaluation can be an effective means of moving toward desirable objectives in the education process. The addition of means as a major consideration provides an excellent opportunity to shape programs as well as the very institutions which facilitate individual growth.

Assessment--A process of inventorying an individual's strengths and weaknesses, needs and personality characteristics, knowledges, skills and attitudes useful in relating the roles demanded by the environment "with the roles the individual is able to play."

> Assessment characteristically begins with an analysis of the criterion and the environment in which the individual lives, learns, and works. It attempts to determine the psychological pressures the environment creates, the roles expected, and the demands and pressures - their hierarchical arrangement, consistency, as well as conflict. It then proceeds to the determination of the kinds of evidence that are appropriate about the individuals who are to be placed in this environment, such as their relevant strengths and weaknesses, their needs and personality characteristics, their skills and abilities.
>
> The evidence collected about the individual in assessment is multiform in that many types of qualitative and quantitative evidence may be collected, some of it highly structured and some of a more projective or unstructured form. The assessor may use evidence from self-reports, observations by others, interviews, projective situations, situational tests, role playing, free association, and so forth. Relevant evidence on a particular characteristic may be secured from several instruments or methods. The assessor attempts to determine the congruence of the different evidence in respect to selected human characteristics.
>
> Through the analysis of the possible relations between evidence on both the individual and the environment, the assessor attempts to determine the kinds of transactions or interactions likely to take place between the two. In order to put all this evidence together, he may attempt to create a model of the environment and a model of the functioning individual.
>
> The task of the assessor in studying the congruence or lack of congruence of the different types of evidence on the individual is dependent on the availability of a *construct* or model that relates otherwise disparate pieces of evidence. Similarly, the interaction between the individual and the environment can be understood only if there is a construct, theory, or model that enables the

> assessor to infer relations between characteristics of the individual and characteristics of the environment. Thus, the primary type of validation for assessment is *construct validity*, that is, the extent to which evidence for specific characteristics in individual and environment or the interactions between the two are explained or explainable in terms of a theory or construct. Assessment may also make use of *predictive* validity in that particular interactions between an individual and an environment are to be predicted from a knowledge of the characteristics of each (1, p. 31).

The promise of assessment lies in the success of relating characteristics or actions of the individual to the characteristics of the environment. The major problem is a lack of sufficiently validated constructs to confirm these relationships. Nevertheless, an approach to decision-making in education which attempts to consider these relationships appears more fruitful than one which measures at a static point in an individual's development or one which evaluates only in terms of externally preordained objectives. We offer the process of assessment for consideration in terms of personnel, pupils and programs.

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The CDA Consortium is a private, non-profit coalition of 30 national organizations which concentrate on the welfare and development of preschool children. It was established in July 1971, with a grant from the Office of Child Development, a division of the U.S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare. It is working to devise methods for assessing the competence of personnel active in preschools.

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